

Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T. Annual Evaluation Summary 2005

**Arizona Department of
Economic Security
Division of Children, Youth and Families**



Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T Program in Brief

- Established in 2000 by Senate Bill 1280
- Administered jointly by DES and DHS
- Statewide substance abuse treatment program for caregivers of families
 - entering child welfare system; and/or
 - receiving cash assistance through TANF



Legislation's Outcome Goals

- Increase in timeliness, availability and accessibility of service
- Recovery from alcohol and drug problems
- Child safety and reduction of child abuse and neglect
- Permanency for children through reunification





Key Findings



Timeliness, Availability, and Accessibility of Services

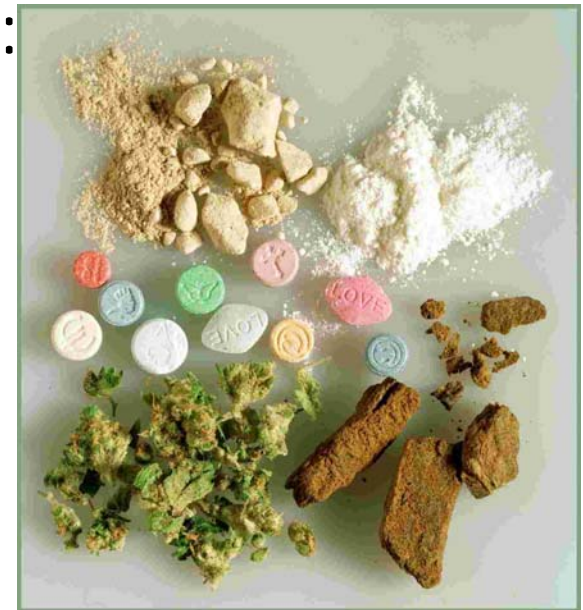
- Nearly 4,000 individuals referred to the program
- Over 80% were contacted through outreach and engagement
- Rapid contact within a day or two
- Nearly 70% received a substance abuse assessment
- Coordinated and comprehensive array of services





Recovery from Alcohol and Drug Problems

- Two-thirds of AFF clients have used alcohol or illegal substances in the 30 days prior to assessment
- Most common substances used:
 - Methamphetamines – 30%
 - Alcohol – 24%
 - Marijuana – 24%
 - Cocaine/crack – 8%
- Polysubstance use – 67%





- Over 50% of client program closures demonstrated no drug use at all during their participation in the program, as verified by drug screenings.
- 15% of clients reporting substance use at enrollment reported no use at the time of closure.
- Over 20% of clients using methamphetamine or marijuana at enrollment reported no substance use at closure.



Child Safety and Reduction of Child Abuse and Neglect

- Children of AFF caregivers experienced less subsequent neglect and abuse compared to state averages.
 - Out of 3,090 AFF clients, only 64 (2%) received a “substantiated” report finding based on one or more allegations filed subsequent to their enrollment in the AFF program.
 - Overall rate reported by CPS for the period ending March 31, 2005 was 8%.



Permanency for Children Through Reunification

- Children of AFF caregivers achieved permanency at rates that exceeded the state average.
 - Over 600 children of AFF caregivers (23%) achieved permanency this year.
 - 15% of AFF children reunified.
 - 11% overall reunification rate reported by CPS for the period ending March 31, 2005.

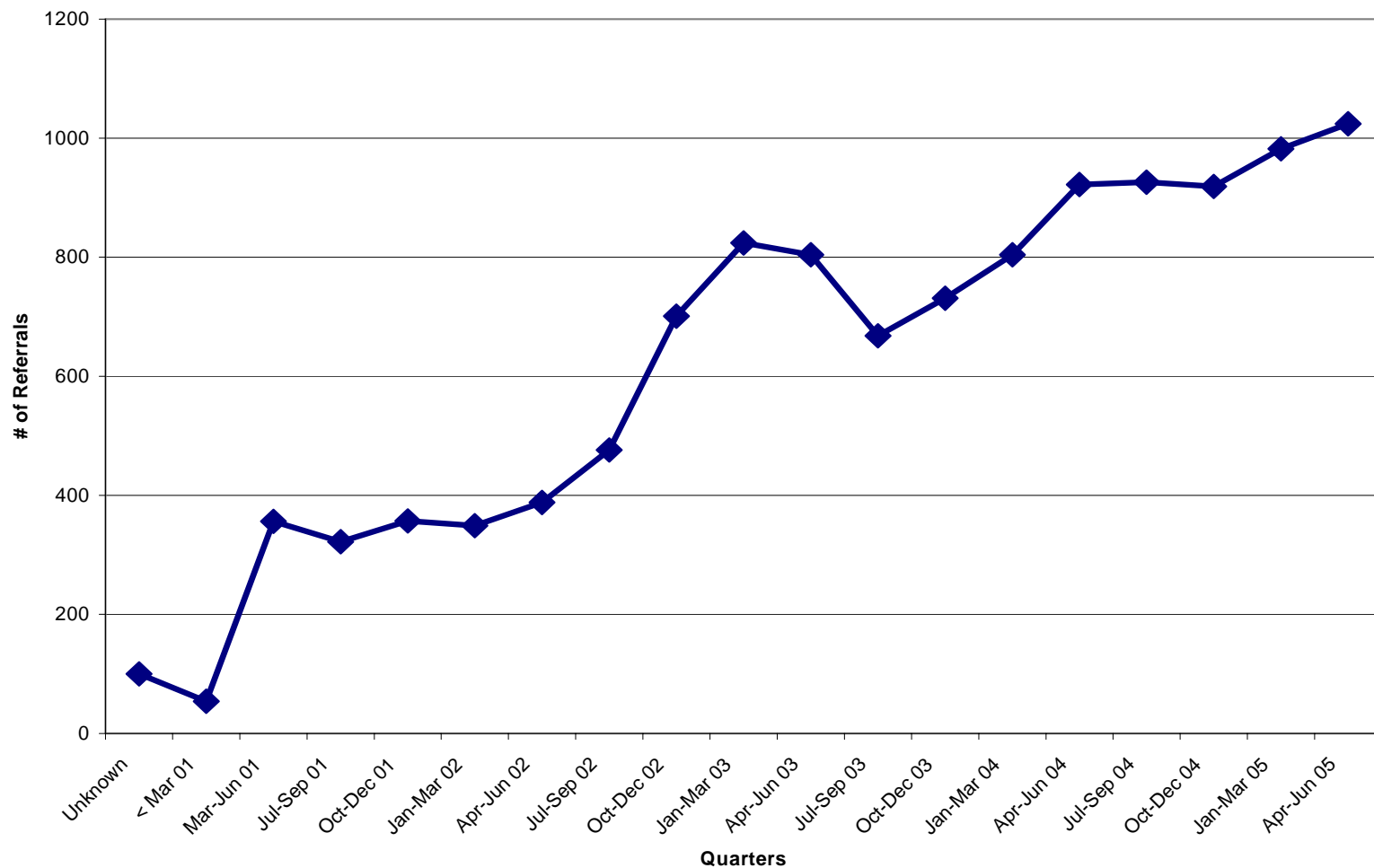




Additional Findings



Program Referrals Continue to Increase





Outreach Successes & Challenges



It took the AFF provider over two months of persistent outreach and contact to get Ramona to agree to check into a residential treatment program. Following her successful completion in residential treatment,

Ramona has transitioned to outpatient treatment and was able to access housing services. Ramona remains clean and sober, has been reunified with her daughter and is employed part time as a peer support specialist in a human services agency.

Outreach is by its very nature much more challenging to providers in rural communities, who have to travel long distances to make face-to-face contact with a referred client. Sometimes clients are ill-informed about the AFF program, are openly hostile to the outreach worker, or are distressed by other issues and not yet ready to contemplate engaging in a treatment program.



Characteristics of Participating AFF Clients

- 73% of AFF participants were women.
- Average age was 31 years.
- One quarter of all AFF participants were of Hispanic descent, 8% African Americans, and 4% American Indians.
- 59% completed high school or GED.
- 27% were employed, either full or part-time.



Service Domains

Table 3.5
Proportion of Service Provision by Service Domain for
Participating AFF Clients

Total Participating AFF Clients = 3,090¹

	# clients	% participating
Treatment Services	2772	89.7%
Rehabilitation Services	416	13.5%
Medical Services	1173	38%
Support Services	3022	97.8%
Crisis Intervention Services	233	7.5%
Inpatient Services	148	4.8%
Residential Services	209	6.8%
Behavioral Health Day Programs	171	5.5%



Service Fund Mix

Table 3.8
Fund Source Mix
Proportion of Participating AFF Clients Receiving Services
Within a Service Domain by Fund Source

	# of Clients Receiving Services	DES funds <i>only</i>	DES <i>and</i> DBHS funds	DBHS funds <i>only</i>
Treatment Services	2772	30.92%	46.10%	22.98%
Rehabilitation Services	416	40.38%	1.44%	58.17%
Medical Services	1173	34.19%	15.77%	50.04%
Support Services	3022	30.34%	60.39%	9.27%
Crisis Intervention Services	233	0.00%	0.43%	99.57%
Inpatient Services	148	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Residential Services	209	16.27%	9.57%	74.16%
Behavioral Health Day Programs	171	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%



Summary and Conclusions



Children throughout the state whose parents have been engaged in AFF services were reunited with their parents at rates that exceed state averages. Children of AFF parents experienced less subsequent neglect and abuse compared to the state average.

Individuals engaged in the AFF program received help that has facilitated reduction and/or abstinence of illicit substances and abuse of alcohol.

Throughout the state, individuals experiencing difficulties with substance use and child neglect or abuse were engaged in treatment services at impressive rates.

Individuals engaged in AFF services received a complimentary set of services from both DES and DBHS, and for many of these individuals, the AFF program has facilitated access to behavioral health treatment services and supports.



Areas for Enhancement

Differences in the services reporting requirements of DES and DBHS impede adequate monitoring of the consistency of AFF service provision statewide.

Past reporting requirements, particularly with regard to substance use and employment, limit the usefulness of the outcome findings from the AFF program. DES may want to examine the new AFF provider contracts, effective July 1, 2005, to assess whether these limitations have been adequately addressed.

Review methods for streamlining multiple services, such as assessment and case management, conducted in both partner agency systems, thereby enhancing the efficiency, design, and collaboration of the program.



Regional variations in AFF service delivery suggest critical areas for enhanced program monitoring and technical assistance.

Explore methods and procedures to reduce days between referral, engagement, assessment, treatment plan and service initiation, particularly for clients referred from AFF to the RBHA system.

Greater coordination between AFF programs, CPS staff and case plans, and RBHA personnel is an area of immediate need.



In Summary

It is apparent that the Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T. program is maturing into a robust and well-coordinated program of services, fulfilling the intent of the enabling legislation that led to its development. During the course of the past state fiscal year, 3,090 individuals under supervision by the Child Protective Services for neglect or abuse of their children, and known to have ongoing issues related to the use of alcohol and drugs, have been served by this innovative program.



More than 400 children have been returned to the custody of their parents without a recurrence of suspected neglect or abuse, Parents have experienced success in addressing their substance use problems.

More than 50% of clients who completed their participation in AFF services demonstrated no drug use at all during their participation in the program, as verified by drug tests.

Fifteen percent of clients who reported using drugs or alcohols at their enrollment in the AFF program reported no use at the time of their discharge.

Over 20% of clients who were using methamphetamine or marijuana at the time of their enrollment in the AFF program reported no use of these illegal drugs at the time of their discharge.

Families have been able to access a seamless network of treatment services and supports designed to promote ongoing recovery and family stability.